GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3325
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2000
HAJ PILGRIMS
S. JAGATHRAKSHAKAN

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a): whether many Haj pilgrims were forced to wait at Jeddah Haj terminal for Air India flights for more than 48 hours for their return journey to India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for not taking appropriate action by the concerned authorities to avoid inconvenience to Haj pilgrims, especially when the same situation was experienced last year also; and

(d) the action proposed to be initiated for the lapse against the officials and measures to be taken to avoid recurrence of such incidents?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV)

(a),(b), (c) and (d) : Some of the flights during phase II (return journey) of Haj operations were delayed due to various reasons. As a result, haj pilgrims had to wait at Jeddah Haj terminal for Air India flights. The reasons for delay of the flights are as under:-

(i) The Charter Operator could not sustain the schedule due to an initial engineering snag;

(ii) Extreme congestion conditions at the Haj Terminal at Jeddah.

(iii) The directive of Saudi Authorities to use the Haj Terminal also for the departure of scheduled flights.

(iv) Only four counters were being allocated to Air India and that too intermittently for about two hours at a time.

(v) The complete contingent of support staff from India could not be put in position in time because of the delay in the issuance of visa by the Saudi Authorities.

(vi) A majority of Haj passengers report at the check-in counter with excess baggage which not only contributes to the congestion but also slows down the entire process of checking-in the passengers.

A review of the reasons has been taken and timely advance action is being undertaken to ensure improvement in services.